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Together

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Together

Cutting a pie or a cake into seven pieces requires a good eye and a sharp knife if everyone wants each piece to be exactly the same size. Alternatively, if all seven persons are agreed that equal amounts are not a priority, no special skill or equipment is needed. The difference between the two scenarios is much more about the attitudes of those who will eat the dessert than the method of dividing it.

When we focus our attention primarily on ourselves as individuals with our perceived rights, it is difficult to please us all. Great care must be taken in measuring and apportioning, whether it is pie, money, equipment, or words of praise. Spontaneity is hardly possible, and joy, scarcely available. On the other hand, when any group, no matter how diverse our backgrounds and interests, choose to acknowledge the value of all the persons involved, we are less concerned with equal treatment than we are with the values we share.

God favors unity among us much more highly than an equality of sameness. We are all equal in value, and all of us are loved dearly as individuals, but we are widely diverse in our personal qualities, in the gifts we have in mind, body, and spirit, and in our experiences of life. God sees no disparity in our differences, and desires nothing more or less than an all-encompassing union of love with each one of us, and of all of us with one another.

In our experiences of God, whether in the midst of activity or in times of quiet reflection, when occupied with our own thoughts or when seeking God in prayer, never have we been inspired, directed, or guided to seek division among people rather than unity. For good reasons, there are some individuals we cannot and should not meet or contact. But the unity God desires for us is not that of personal interaction with every single person – at least not in this life. The separations and distances we must at times observe are based on personal limitations, not on the God-given value of every human being. God loves us, but does not force any of us to love in return. The Spirit of God within us is oriented favorably towards all other people, but we cannot compel respect, much less love, in anyone else.

We might have to divide a pizza to share it among a group of people, but our calling is always to seek what we have in common with others, and to become more unified, rather than the opposite. Just as we do not have to recognize the transfer of oxygen from the air into our blood cells for the action of breathing to sustain our lives, we are not

required to acknowledge the movement of God's Spirit among us encouraging our efforts at unity.

People, not God, bring about division among us. Selfishness is divisive, because a selfish person's energy is centered on "me and mine." Love unifies, because our main concern is "us and ours." If God were selfish, we, and the universe about us, would not exist. Creation is an expression of God's desire to share with us.

Some of our every-day experiences reveal the spiritual tendency we have to share rather than keep to ourselves. When we take a meal with others, whether at home, in a cafeteria or restaurant, or "brown bagging it," the energy we expend in the bit of organizing for "we" instead of just "me" is repaid by an inner satisfaction that we recognize, even if we cannot name it. Though there are many things that we can do alone, often we find an additional positive quality to our time when we are in the same room with one or more persons we trust, even if we do not converse. If we work together with others as volunteers on a common project, though we might be quite diverse in religion, race, age, or any number of variables, we often experience an appreciation for the shared purpose and values that we have in common.

Though there have been, are, and hopefully will be, many billions of individual people on planet earth, God has one desire for us all: that in love of God and neighbor, we come together.